



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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State Funds Restore Preschool Access for 8,300 Children, State Schools Chief Announces

SACRAMENTO—More than 8,300 additional children from low-income families around California will have access to high-quality preschool this year after the recent distribution of \$25 million in state “restoration” funds, State Superintendent Tom Torlakson announced today.

This funding is included in the 2013-14 state budget approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. The \$25 million partially restores services for the part-day, part-year California State Preschool Program that has been cut by \$122 million in recent years. State child development programs overall have been cut by about \$1 billion.

“Everything from the economic downturn to federal sequestration has hit some of our most vulnerable families undeniably hard in recent years,” Torlakson said. “Our hope is that these funds can begin to remove some of the obstacles working families face by opening doors to high-quality preschool that might otherwise have been shut.”

The California Department of Education recently distributed the funds to 207 existing contractors for use at 516 sites around the state. Each of the contractors will receive enough money to add a full classroom of 24 students, unless the request was for less funding.

Earlier this year, President Obama called for making early childhood education a national priority – a call Torlakson applauded. Torlakson also noted that, in California, leaders in the Legislature, in particular the Women’s Caucus, have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to restoring early learning as the economy improves. California is home to one out of every eight children in America under the age of five.

“Children in strong early education programs are better prepared for school and reap some real benefits that last them their whole lives,” said Torlakson, who acknowledged that these one-time funds are only a first step. “All children deserve a chance to learn and succeed in life, and I hope the restoration of these services is just the beginning.”

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